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| **Date:** | 15 February 2012 |
| **Subject:** | RTOs use NBN to bridge time and distance gap |

Using broadband-based information technology to improve training access and outcomes in the vocational education and training sector, learning tools are currently being tested and trialled to overcome distance, travel and time costs for e-learning and e-assessment facilitation.

With the increasing use of e-learning and e-assessment across the country, and consistent with the government’s wish to see the rollout of the National Broadband Network (NBN) promote innovative applications and services, the *vStream* project aims to build the capacity of private registered training organisations (RTOs) to use new tools, platforms and systems for e-learning and e-assessment.

The project has been made possible through funding from the National VET E-learning Strategy, whose NBN E-learning Programs provide opportunitiesto create innovative approaches to demonstrate the power of broadband to enhance outcomes for learners, and promote growth in broadband-based training as the NBN rollout proceeds.

“High-speed broadband offers opportunities for improved learning and assessment services to be delivered more cheaply and effectively to a much wider range of the population,” says Fiona Huskinson, National NBN Program Manager.

The project is focusing on common freeware and cost-effective tools, using emerging cloud applications for video streaming and mobile technologies. Options for TelePresence will be explored to overcome issues of distance, location, travel and time costs for online learning and assessment.

As the lead project agent, the Australian Council for Private Education and Training (ACPET) is coordinating the collaboration of five RTOs in four states to develop high definition video content and pilot interactive synchronous video communications and recordings for e-learning, e-assessment and online recognition of prior learning. With sound e-learning experience across health and beauty, business and finance services, community services, conservation and land management, and dental assistance, the RTOs are exploring new opportunities made possible by the NBN.

The National VET E-learning Strategy is the responsibility of the Flexible Learning Advisory Group (FLAG), a key policy advisory group on national directions and priorities for information and communication technologies in the VET sector.

“By sponsoring e-learning programs at NBN sites, we are expanding participation and access for learners, stimulating innovative approaches to training and employment, and improving the skill levels of the Australian workforce,” says FLAG Chair Raymond Garrand, Chief Executive of the South Australian Department of Further Education, Employment, Science and Technology.

“We are excited at the high quality of these projects, which demonstrate the strong interest in increasing participation in training and improving skill levels in the workforce.”

**Core statements for editorial use**

* The National VET E-learning Strategy 2012-2015 (‘the Strategy’) is aimed at strengthening the Australian training sector’s use of new learning technologies, stimulating innovative approaches to increasing participation in training and employment, and improving the skill levels of the Australian workforce
* Investment in the Strategy will stimulate innovative approaches to increasing participation in training and improve the skill levels of the Australian workforce
* To enable the three-year program of action, government funding has been approved to:
* capitalise on the rollout of the National Broadband Network by demonstrating the benefits of the national investment in broadband
* support large-scale workforce development in industry through partnerships and comprehensive e-learning advice
* expand participation and access for individuals through e-learning programs delivering foundation skills and e-literacy
* The Strategy is managed by the Flexible Learning Advisory Group (FLAG), a key policy advisory group on national directions and priorities for information and communication technologies in the VET sector
* The chair of FLAG is Mr Raymond Garrand, Chief Executive of the South Australian Department of Further Education, Employment, Science and Technology.

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